

Tukwila Night Out Against Crime Rainbow Haven Trailer Park

August 6, 2013

SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The City of Tukwila is updating its Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan to guide the future of the City's parks and recreation system. To create a plan that meets the needs of Tukwila's diverse community, the PROS planning process includes many opportunities for public input, participation, and engagement. An inclusive process that attracts diverse community input is critical to developing a plan that meets the needs of the community now and in the future.

As part of the City's recent strategic planning process, the City along with La Casa de la Raza convened a community meeting at Rainbow Haven Trailer Community on South 152nd Street on August 23rd, 2012. The community is an established low-income, Latino community near the Tukwila International Highway corridor. At that meeting, community members expressed concern over the lack of suitable areas for children to play, and crime and other negative activity at the closest public park. For the PROS planning process, the City re-visited the community during their National Night Out Against Crime block party, on August 6th, 2013, organized by community members and La Casa de la Raza.

The PROS team was comprised of BERK (the facilitator), a city staff representative, and a Spanish interpreter from Dynamic Language. The team conducted intercept interviews with small groups of people who attended the block party. Approximately 80 -100 people were at the event at any one time, and the PROS team interviewed approximately 30 people over an hour and a half.

The interviews focused on the following topics:

- Where do children and youth spend time afterschool? Where do they most often play?
- Do you use any community parks? What are your typical activities?
- What can be changed or improved to increase your ability to use the parks?
- Have you ever used, or are you familiar with, the Tukwila Community Center?
- How could the City best support your family in having a safe and healthy life?

SUMMARY

Top Concerns

- **Access to a safe places for children to play remains a priority.** When asked about where children play, everyone said having a safe place for children to play was a primary concern: “We worry about the children.”
 - **Children mostly play in the street in front of their homes.** Everyone reported that children play in the street in front of their homes, which the residents do not consider safe due to:
 - **Traffic speed.** Many people expressed concern over how fast people drive, and more than one requested speed limit signs and enhanced speed bumps to slow traffic.
 - **Unknown people idling in their cars.** In addition to traffic, a couple of people were concerned about unknown vehicles pulling into the complex, idling, and then leaving again. Though the unknown people did not do anything wrong, it was unsettling to the residents and prevented them from letting their children play outside. They have tried to call the police—but technically the idlers are not doing anything wrong.
- **Access to sports and other organized youth activities.** Most people’s middle and high school students spent their afterschool time at home. Only one family reported having their children enrolled in afterschool sports (track). Many were interested in having their children participate in afterschool sports, but were unsure of what was available and felt that price would be an obstacle, particularly for families with more than one child. Everyone we spoke to with children, had three or more; while sports and activity fees for one child may not be too much, the cost of enrolling all of their children was prohibitive.
- **Crime, prostitution, and public safety.** Crime remains a concern of the community and continues to affect community member’s quality of life negatively. A couple of residents who have lived in the community for 15 years shared that for the first 5 years they lived in the neighborhood they wouldn’t even lock their vehicles. That would be unheard of today.

Current Park Use

- **Cascade View Pak.** Most participants were familiar with Cascade View Park but reported not using it. When asked why, the first response was that it was unsafe/uncomfortable due to people buying and selling drugs there. A couple of people reported being shouted at and approached, but they could not understand what the people wanted due to language barriers. While they liked the park, the felt the distance and presence of bad activities were obstacles to using the park.
- **Participants only reported using two parks:**
 - **Angle Lake Park.** One family had family barbeques at Angle Lake Park. They liked the picnic areas and ability to swim in the lake.
 - **Crestview Park.** A couple of people reported going to Crestview Park, which they thought was nice, but noted that it was a 30 – 35 minute walk away.

Desires for Parks

- **A park closer to their home.** Many considered Cascade View Park too far from their neighborhood to be a reasonable option (aside from the crime they associated with the park). Thorndyke Elementary School was considered close enough to reasonably walk to.

- **Park amenities for smaller children to play.** Apart from the street, the other place kids played were at the local schools. Foster High School was specifically mentioned for pick-up soccer but lacked any amenities for smaller children. Residents asked if the school grounds could be improved with play equipment such as a slide or swing set for smaller children.
- **Picnic shelters for family gatherings and the Ability to reserve them.** Residents said they would like to have picnic shelters and barbeque pits that could be reserved for larger family gatherings. They would have more parties and picnics at the parks if they could reserve the area. When asked about fees, most thought they could pay a nominal fee if it wasn't too much.

Community Center and City Recreation Programming

- **Most participants were unfamiliar with the Tukwila Community Center.** Most people were unfamiliar with the Tukwila Community Center. Some had never heard of it and some knew the building but thought it was a school. One woman had been to the center and felt it was very nice, but too costly for her to use regularly. She was unaware that there were scholarship opportunities available for using the facility. [We gave free pass coupons to some of the people we spoke with].
- **Programming desires focused on youth needs.** Most requests for services focused on the needs of children and youth. When asked if they themselves (adults) had any interest in recreation or fitness programs, most said they believe they needed to exercise more but could not due to work and family responsibilities. If they were to fit more exercise in, women reported walking as their preferred form of exercise.
- **Teen Night was appealing, but most people were unfamiliar with the program.** Many of the people we spoke with have teenaged children, but were unfamiliar with the Teen Night program. Once we described the program, they were excited about it and thought it would be a good fit for their needs. They like that it was supervised and safe, with many saying their teens were bored staying at home in the evening. The mothers generally asked about the cost of the program and whether transportation was available, suggesting cost and access could be barriers. The fathers (a small number) generally asked about what the activities were and if it was supervised.

Other Feedback

- **Appreciation for the city asking about their needs and concerns.** Some people expressed gratitude toward the City for soliciting their input and concerns. A few acknowledged that the Latino community needs to improve their own efforts to better the community and advocate for their needs to the City.
- **Landlords not responding to maintenance requests.** One woman is having difficulty getting her landlord at Amara Point Apartments to respond to requests for maintaining the deck railings on her apartment. She feels it is unsafe for her and her children, but the landlord has been unresponsive.